

## NETHERLANDS

### Innovation & cooperation

#### Location

Nationwide

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P1 – Knowledge transfer & innovation

#### Measure

M1 – Knowledge transfer & information actions

#### Funding

Total budget 147 937 (EUR)

EAFRD 44 381 (EUR)

National/Regional 44 381 (EUR)

Private / own 59 175 (EUR)

#### Project duration

2017 to 2018

#### Project promoter

Delphy BV

#### Email

[c.oele@delphy.com](mailto:c.oele@delphy.com)

#### Website

<https://delphy.nl/>

A CAP-funded knowledge transfer project targeting mushroom producers in the Netherlands.

### Summary

This project organised a series of training and networking activities for the mushroom production sector in the Netherlands with the aim of helping to make it more financially and environmentally sustainable.



© Delphy

### Project Results

National Mushroom Day strengthened collaboration between growers, suppliers and interest groups in the Gelderland and North Brabant areas.

The number of people making use of the online courses and training videos has now exceeded 450.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ It is important to ensure that projects employ a broad range of indicators, such as online engagement, to demonstrate the full extent of impact.
- ❑ It is important to have a clear understanding of project rates and costs before submitting an application in order to manage expectations and avoid disappointment.
- ❑ The pre-financing capital investment requirement demands an unrealistic level of liquidity on the part of project beneficiaries.



© Delphy

### Context

In 2016, there were 132 companies producing mushrooms in the Netherlands compared to over 700 in 1995. The decline is partly due to increased competition from Poland and China, but it is also because of the high production costs in the Netherlands; particularly, labour and energy. The modernisation of mushroom production is therefore seen as a route to making the sector more financially sustainable. This is coupled with a desire to improve the capacity of producers to reduce harmful emissions, thus taking steps towards environmental sustainability too.

### Objectives

The aim of the project was to help Dutch mushroom producers reduce their production costs through greater energy efficiency.

### Activities

Support from the Dutch Rural Development Programme was used to finance the following knowledge transfer and information activities:

- i. A national event on mushroom production: 'National Mushroom Day' was attended by 225 individuals who participated in five workshops. Due to the high level of interest, the number of workshops on offer was increased from three to five.
- ii. Three themed training courses:
  - Optimum air conditions. A three-day course covering production-related topics, such as evaporation and mushroom activity, air humidity, use of fresh air, the overpressure system, central duct or individual pre-control, air distribution and cell division, central energy supply, saving energy, generating (renewable) energy, and energy-saving climate modules.
  - New markets. A three-day course focused on changing market conditions and the increased requirement for mushroom production companies to be adaptable and flexible.
  - Digital cultivation assistant. A course detailing how a digital cultivation assistant can support a producer's climate control/analysis work, ensuring optimum cultivation conditions.

- iii. Developing the "Mushroom Valley" online course: this free, 30-day hybrid learning module (requiring 8 days of onsite/in-person attendance) focused on the climate settings and data analysis capabilities of a remotely operated Quality Management System for mushroom production.

### Main results

National Mushroom Day succeeded in bringing growers, suppliers and interest groups together, mostly representing the areas of Gelderland and North Brabant. As a result, cooperation between these parties has been strengthened.

The online courses were successfully launched and are of a high quality. Although the participant numbers were less than expected for the in-person activities of the project, the number of people making use of the online courses and training videos has now exceeded 450.

### Key lessons

The project initiators set only limited performance indicators for participation and 'reach' when they were preparing their project plan. As a result, part of their work was not reimbursed because the grant was distributed according to those indicators, and in addition, in-person participant numbers were lower than expected. It is very important, therefore, to ensure a broad range of participation and impact indicators that include aspects such as online engagement.

The beneficiary did not receive the market rate for their work due to a local authority decision to cap the hourly rates for project delivery. The beneficiary was not aware of this in advance of submitting the application and they cite this as a reason for not wishing to collaborate on similar projects in the future. The advice here is to have a clear understanding of project rates and costs before submitting an application in order to manage expectations and avoid disappointment.

Pre-financing 50 000 euro over a long period (1> year) to implement the project activities before being reimbursed by the rural development programme, requires a lot of liquidity from beneficiaries. This threshold is considered too high.

### Additional sources of information

<https://delphy.nl/flyer-delphy-klimaatcursus-wereldwijs-met-mushrooms-2019-2/>

<http://denationalepaddenstoelendag.nl>